

Rain Will Help City's Water Supply

The weekend rainfall that amounted to just under three-quarters of an inch provided a breather for pumps at the San Lorenzo plant, Water Superintendent Weston Webber reported today.

Operating 16 hours daily since early this month—more than two months ahead of normal schedule—the pumps were not needed yesterday and probably won't be used for "a couple of weeks" even if there is no more rain, Webber said.

Strawberry irrigators and home gardeners will use less water in the next fortnight due to the rain, he said.

"If we get no more rain we'll probably start to pump within a couple of weeks," Webber predicted.

Four inches of precipitation is what the Santa Cruz watershed really needs to take the system comfortably over the critical two-month period between mid-July and mid-September, he said. Scanty rainfall since the first of the year forced the pumping plant into premature operation early in April.

Coastal sources, the river and water department wells will provide enough water to squeeze through the summer without rationing but it would be a "tight situation unless the dry spell was broken," Webber said last week.

Three additional inches of rain will forestall further 16-hour-a-day pumping until late in June, he said today.